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A

PICTURE OF THE TIMES,

IN A

LETTER,

ADDRESSED TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

BY A

LOVER OF PEACE.

“Do not unto another that which you would not wish he should do unto you.”

THIRD EDITION WITH ADDITIONS.

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by WILLIAM HODGSON.

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

TWO years have now elapsed since you were plunged by men deeply enamoured of places and pensions into the present *just* and *necessary* war! at least so your ministers have been graciously pleased to term it; and these are not the days when men have the hardihood to contradict such high and *incorruptible* authority. The disgrace and disasters that have attended the two campaigns are too recent to need repetition: No one can yet have forgotten the memorable retreat from before DUNKIRK, performed with such wonderful celerity, that most of the soldiers left even their blankets behind them, to say nothing of the immense quantity of artillery and stores; nay, such was their haste, that a waggon loaded with wounded soldiers

was left on the sands near Nieuport, between high and low water mark. On the flood making up, these miserable victims all perished in the sea.—The disgrace you suffered in the affair of Toulon, will ever remain an indelible stain upon the annals of British history.—GUADALOUPE and ST. DOMINGO, are proofs incontestible of the imbecility of the measures of our *heaven-born* minister and his *worthy* colleagues. To this list of national disgrace, is now to be added the retreat of the Duke of York's army from Holland: And here language wants terms to express the dreadful disasters that have befallen our poor unhappy brethren. Alas! far the greater part of them sleep with their fathers; and are now as indifferent to their country's fate, as ministers seem to have been to theirs: no more they wield the implements of death; peaceful they sleep on the clay cold sod, a sad and melancholy spectacle of their country's folly, and the *humanity* of your ministers: every way they fell, some frozen to death, others killed with fatigue, many starved for want of sustenance: continually harassed by a conquering enemy, and obliged to travel without guides through a pathless country, in the most bitter season of the year; every day left hundreds of the wretched youth, whom five pence a-day, and a red-coat, had allured to join the standard of war, I will not say despotism—to manure the earth with their mangled carcases!!! Humanity shudders at the relation.

The following statement, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, will give some idea of the immense expenditure of human blood, that has attended your foolish interference in French affairs.

*Return of the Duke of York's Army on the
12th September, 1794.*

CAVALRY.

	Officers.	Sergeants.	Drums and Trumpets.	Rank & File.
British, . -	165	231	72	4274
Hanoverians, -	112	184	44	1365
Hesse Cassel, -	46	116	23	860
Hesse Darmstadt,	10	36	00	280
Total,	<u>333</u>	<u>567</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>6779</u>

INFANTRY.

	Officers.	Sergeants.	Drums and Trumpets.	Rank & File.
British, - -	583	924	511	19734
Hanoverians, -	143	273	213	3284
Hesse Cassel, -	135	403	160	3029
Hesse Darmstadt,	44	93	000	1327
Total,	<u>905</u>	<u>1693</u>	<u>884</u>	<u>27374</u>
Cavalry as above,	<u>333</u>	<u>567</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>6779</u>
	1238	2260	1023	34153
		Drums and trumpets,		1023
		Sergeants,		2260
		Officers,		<u>1238</u>
Grand Total,	-	-	-	38674

Out of which, on the 10th of February 1795, the numbers of the army, according to the best and most authentic information, was FIVE THOUSAND!!! Thus, in the short space of five months, THIRTY-THREE THOUSAND of our fellow creatures, to say nothing of the Austrian slaves who have bit the dust, and the women and children who followed the army, have been immolated at the shrine of folly, in the fruitless attempt to give a government to the French people, restore tyranny, and protect the Dutch against their will!!! This is not all; for, to add to your misfortunes, near FOUR HUNDRED sail of British vessels are ice-bound in the different ports of Holland, and of consequence, prizes to the French, who have now given liberty to the Batavians!!! Yes, these same *sans-culottes*, these *barbarous* Frenchmen as they are called, after conquering Holland,—have left them to form such a government for themselves, as they conceive will be most for their happiness.—Property they have every where respected!!! Over the dreadful scene of calamity, that has befallen our unhappy countrymen, the eye of the philosopher must shed a silent tear; for alas! all their efforts to undeceive the deluded people of this unhappy nation have hitherto proved fruitless; led on by an enthusiasm for they know not what, reason is banished from their councils, experience is of no avail, headlong they rush to certain and inevitable ruin, regardless of the lives that are continually

continually falling the sacrifice of their extravagant and delirious imagination. To men, indeed, who sit at home at their ease, in the comfortable enjoyment of all the luxuries of life, with places and pensions out of all calculation, paid by the industry of the people, to a certain great personage, and a certain young gentleman, remarkable for their *penchant* for playing at soldiers, and to venal apostates, alarmists, and *agricultural* secretaries. All these things may be very amusing; but like the frogs in the fable, you should recollect, that although it may be sport for them, it is death to you.

The striking *humanity* of your ministers, so very conspicuous in all their actions, has more than once induced them to declare this to be a war of extermination. Good heavens! what, can men be found, coolly and deliberately to get up in the House of Commons, at the close of the eighteenth century, and *modestly* propose the extermination of TWENTY-SIX MILLIONS of human beings, whose only crime has been to destroy a despotic tyranny, execute the tyrants, and resume, that which is the unalienable right of all men breathing, LIBERTY? Yet such is the fact, and to fill up the measure of infamy—the people of England, who call themselves free, and should, of course, be the friends of free men, have, either voluntarily, or by force, acquiesced in this *merciful* measure. Nay, solemn FASTS

have been established for the purpose of imploring Almighty God to second their *philanthropic* views, and assist in *murdering* their fellow men, for having had the audacity to think for themselves in the formation of such a government as they conceived most likely to be for their general happiness; and what is the basis upon which they have established this government? why, upon those *vile* and *ruinous* ones of LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and FRATERNITY, upon the *diabolical* RIGHTS OF MAN!!! Future ages, when they read the black historic page that shall record these events, will be inclined to discredit the sanity of the historian; they will scarcely believe that human nature could have been so depraved, so void of feeling, so dreadfully wicked!!

But although ministers found it right to order a General Fast, it was not meant to include themselves, indeed the weight of public business lies too heavy on their shoulders, for them to be able to Fast—they therefore had a snug dinner amongst themselves, by which the nation no doubt was *highly* benefited;—at least one part of it certainly was, the *Wine Merchants*;—another advantage attended this measure, which was, that at least they did not share in the *piety* of calling on the Deity, to destroy their fellow-creatures, although they may as sincerely wish it as the most zealous devoteé.

Now although I am perfectly convinced that
neither

neither the *immaculate* Mr. Pitt, his *courageous* friend Mr. Windham, the *ribband hunting* DUKE, or the *sublime* and *beautiful* PENSIONER were really serious in their declarations, and full well knew the absurdity of attempting to exterminate the French people ; not that I mean by any means to deny their want of sufficient *wickedness* to have put the measure into the fullest execution had they had the power ; no, far be it from me to indulge any such *seditious*, if not *treasonable* ideas ! He must indeed be a madman, who can doubt for a moment of the *humanity* of their intentions, they have too great a veneration for their friend and ally, the *all merciful* CATHERINE, not to copy her example when occasion serves. Yet it may so happen, that without the privity or consent of these *pious*, *able*, and *disinterested* statesmen, it may in reality become a war of extermination—of AUSTRIAN, PRUSSIAN, ENGLISH, SPANISH, GERMAN, and SARDINIAN Automaton. For of the miserable groupes that these countries have vomited forth in their Quixotic crusade against France, not an eighth part is now left to deplore the loss of their miserable and devoted comrades ; every where it has been the same. The return above quoted is a melancholy confirmation of this assertion.—In the West Indies, fatigue, sickness, battle has so thinned your legions, that there was not, according to the last accounts from Jamaica, a sufficient number of troops for the protection of your West India islands, much less to maintain you in the possession of the French colonies ;—and the

next

next account from thence will in all probability be of the same nature as the last dispatches from the army on the continent.

Notwithstanding all these misfortunes, misfortunes never to be repaired, for who can make satisfaction to the widowed mother and wretched orphan for the loss of the husband and father whose preservation formed their chief care and delight, whose industrious hands supplied them with their daily food, and enriched his country ; you are still told you must not think of making peace, and what is the reason given? Why, forsooth that there is not such a government in France as your *disinterested* rulers can condescend to treat with!!! Nay do not start at the word *disinterested*, for certainly nothing can have possibly exceeded the *moderation* of Mr. PITT, in providing for his family and dependants, why they do not draw from the public purse above EIGHTY THOUSAND pounds per ann. for all their eminent services—notwithstanding his own brother was first Lord of the Admiralty, and *protected your commerce so well* that you did not lose above TWO SHIPS out of THREE of your merchantmen. I would, on this point, ask you one serious question, do you think that the French conduct all their mighty concerns by chance, that continual success attends all their measures from accident? Or do you not rather believe that they have a government that has given proofs of full maturity, of Herculean strength and the most profound wisdom?—If so, it is folly to say they have not a government with whom you can
treat

treat for peace, has not the GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY already treated with them for peace, was he not one of your allies? Indeed report strongly indicates that your *virtuous* and *faithful* ally the KING OF PRUSSIA, has actually made peace with them!! The fact is that the present ministers have, and they well know it, rendered themselves so very obnoxious to the French nation by their boyish and petulant invectives against them, that they are both ashamed and afraid of making any overtures lest they should be rejected, not because the French are unwilling to make peace with THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND, but because they would insist upon other ministers being employed in the negociation, this would deprive them of their places, and rather than that, to use the language of some of the orators of St. Stephens—PERISH OUR COMMERCE AND SACRIFICE MILLIONS!!!

People of England—It seems time you should arouse from your lethargy and contemplate the scene before you! cannot the miseries of your armies, sent to the slaughter like oxen to the butchery? cannot such accounts as have lately been received from the continent, that the average of each regiment was TWENTY MEN FROZEN TO DEATH; of a regiment leaving England, ONE THOUSAND strong reduced to ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY; of another reduced to ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY THREE; of the soldiers being without shoes and starving for want of provisions—notwithstanding Mr. BROOK

WATSON, your Commissary General, draws upon the Treasury for ONE MILLION, NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS at a time; cannot the infernal practices made use of to recruit your armies by every species of diabolical knavery that the fertile imagination of commissioned crimps, and their wretched satellites can devise, of which you had such pleasant evidence last summer at CHARING-CROSS, and in ST. GEORGE'S-FIELDS, where poor fellows, after being decoyed by various manœuvres, were stripped, handcuffed, and thus made GENTLEMEN VOLUNTEERS?—Cannot the extravagant price of all the necessaries of life;—Meat seven-pence a pound;—Bread nine-pence the quartern loaf;—Coals two-shillings, half-a-crown, and three-shillings the bushel;—All in consequence of this war;—Cannot all these things I say, awaken you to a sense of your real situation and induce you to seek after peace?—will you never leave off warring against men fighting for their liberties, until you have so exhausted your country as to leave nothing but the aged and infirm, women and children to support the accumulated burthens occasioned by your folly? Your ancestors shed their blood to give you some relief from the oppression of the STUARTS, and will you so far insult their memory as to fight against men who, following their glorious example, have thrown off the cruel oppression of the CAPETS, who were your most bitter enemies and thereby leave your children a prey to an enormous load of additional taxes that must be the consequence of your stupid fondness for, and perseverance in WAR, and must be levied to pay subsidies

subsidies to a gang of despots,—to powers who have always been your enemies when opportunity offered, who laugh at your credulity and delight in blood and plunder ;—Pensions to villainous apostates, who shall concur in this iniquitous measure, —to commissaries general of armies---to sinecure placemen who shall vote for the continuance of a contest, so profitable to a few inhuman wretches who seek after nothing but their own emolument and advantage, regardless of what injury society may sustain by the gratification of their insatiable thirst for wealth and honors? Will you wait until the French are at your doors—until your commerce is entirely ruined—until you manufacturing towns have become deserts—until all your traders are bankrupts, because a drunken boy, and his place hunting associates tell you, you cannot make peace with honour?---what honour will attend you when you are conquered?---Will you still be content to be drafted by hundreds and thousands to be murdered in a contest of which you ought to be ashamed?--what shall Englishmen fight against liberty?--What security have you, should the despots of Europe, by your assistance, prevail over the French, that they may not in turn make you submit to the galling yoke of slavery? Look at the unhappy fate of POLAND, where by your *merciful* allies the PRUSSIANS and RUSSIANS, the inhabitants of that devoted country, have been massacred by TWENTY THOUSAND at a time in cool blood, *in order to restore them to the blessings of a good government!!!* and to eradicate their *false* ideas of liberty,---and are now so reduced,

by

by their ravages, for want of the provisions, that these blood-hounds have wantonly destroyed that they are dying by the road sides and in their cottages of hunger!!! Look, I say, at the fate of these brave people and tremble for yourselves.--Beside, let me ask you, how many of you have quarrelled with Frenchmen, and for what? How many of you will be benefited by their subjugation to the *blessings* of their ancient despotism? How many of you must yet be sacrificed before you *march into Paris* ? Will you be made happier by the recollection of having driven liberty from the earth? Remember this war has already cost you above FIFTY MILLIONS of money---and nearly as many thousand lives, without your having gained one inch of ground towards your object.---Reflect, be wise and make peace, and, by this measure, save if possible the remnant of your unhappy countrymen, who must inevitably by a continuance of the war be sacrificed as well many thousand more with no better chance of success than has hitherto attended you, for if when the country of your allies was entirely at their command; you could effect nothing against these *wicked* Frenchmen, what must be your prospect now HOLLAND and its NAVY, the NETHERLANDS, great part of SPAIN,---FOUR of the RICHEST ELECTORATES of GERMANY, LEIGE, SAVOY, and great part of PIEDMONT, are alienated from the confederacy and added to the irresistible power of the French nation.

Remember

Remember also, that those powers who at first were principals in this *merciful* war against FREEDOM, and who only called upon you as their ally, and as an auxillary, have kindly condescended to withdraw themselves from the fore ground of the picture, and to leave the whole honour of it to yourselves for a very *moderate* premium.—Why, now the KING of SARDINIA for example, charges you no more than TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS per annum, for defending his own dominions!—Then the KING of PRUSSIA, why he only receives THREE MILLIONS and odd sterling, yearly, for SIXTY THOUSAND troops, that he never brought into the field against the French, although he employed them very successfully against the Poles, with whom you were not at war!! And the EMPEROR of GERMANY, very *modestly* condescends to accept of only SIX MILLIONS of money for giving you the precedence!!! as a loan indeed he says, but if he should not pay, pray in what Court of Judicature are you to sue him for the money? No doubt it is certainly very true, that these sums thus *honourably* spent, and which make together the *trifling* sum of TEN MILLIONS; would MAINTAIN AND CLOATH COMFORTABLY, ALL THE POOR PEOPLE OF ENGLAND; but then the *immortal* Son of Chatham, was *born* a minister; he was made a statesman in *heaven*, where he got his *memory* I have not yet learnt!! and it would be rank *impiety* not to let him manage your affairs in his
 own

own way, which considering the high authority from which he holds his ministerial abilities, must certainly and indeed have proved themselves to be very different from any *earth-born* minister, I am afraid I should be in danger of an indictment for *High Treason*, if I called them *superior* to any thing that ever had existence. Another thing you should recollect is, that these *high contracting* powers, do not like to be troubled with Bank Notes, and insist on their subsidies and loans being paid in GOLD and SILVER, this will readily account for the scarcity of GUINEAS so much complained of by some dissatisfied beings, though you see *without any reason*, if you can go on a little longer, they will be rarities only to be found in the cabinets of the curious—but then you may have plenty of paper!!!

My advice to you therefore is, pay no subsidies to allies, and thus keep your gold and silver at home; turn out all your present ministers, make peace with the French, insist upon an universal suffrage of the people and annual parliaments, abolish all sinecure places and unmerited pensions, cultivate your commerce, cherish your manufactures, love all men as your brothers, and never go to war but when you are obliged to do it in self defence.

A LOVER OF PEACE.

FINIS.

